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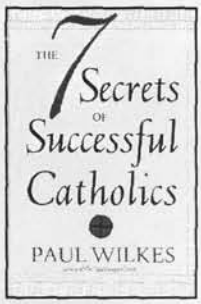

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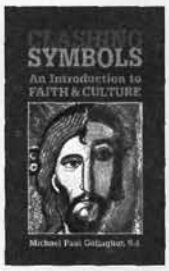

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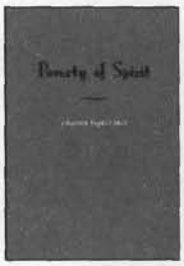

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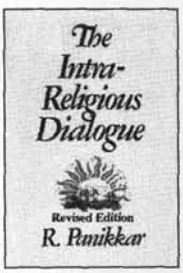

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COMMONWEAL

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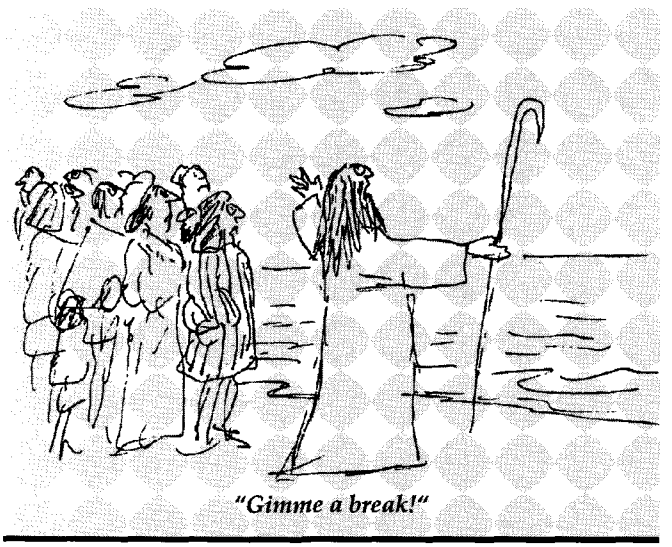

"Gimme a break!"

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To the Editors

A mass of Masses

Does attendance at fourteen Masses in one morning hint at overdone piety? Perhaps for some, but in my case, reading "Celebrating Mass" [January 30] was pure pleasure. Each writer included me in a personal-eye's view, and, reassuringly, I found no strangers on the altars or seated around me. As Peggy Rosenthal realized, all of us—bumbling in one way or another "toward the Kingdom"—are still one Body.

BETTY ANN WEBER
Orlando, Fla.

All is forgiven

On the basic authority principle that it is easier to seek forgiveness than to ask permission, I have taken the liberty of making ten copies of your "A Day in the Life of the Roman Mass" (your title was different but I like mine better). Payment enclosed. I loved the collection and found myself nodding in recognition over and over. What is more important to me, I was thrilled to find so much positive liturgical experience scattered over such a broad geographical range. I said to myself, "Our catechumenate has got to read this." Thanks for an excellent job of reporting.

(REV.) BILL MCLAUGHLIN
Hyde Park, Mass.

Three-way split

Your issue on contemporary liturgy is evidence of many things, not least the inescapable conclusion that the Catholic church is in the process of dividing itself along lines almost identical to modern Judaism. You illustrated the reform wing (a lot) and the conservative (once, at Brompton Oratory), but it is odd that you omitted the orthodox, represented by the traditionalist liturgical movement, which is constantly growing both here and abroad, especially among young people.

As with the Jewish community, Catholics may continue to find a certain common cultural identity, but any disinterested scholar will be increasingly hard-pressed to understand them as adherents of the same religion. Such are the bitter fruits of "local church" theology. I thank God every day that I have access to the traditional Latin rite, and I thank him in addition that disputes among Cardinal Mahoney, Mother Angelica, and Father Fessio are now his problems, and not mine.

DAVID KUBIAK
Crawfordsville, Ind.

The writer is professor of classics at Wabash College.

Liturgical horrors

I'm afraid that my experience of Catholic liturgies is far worse than that of any of your correspondents. In Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, my wife and I have traveled from church to church in search of a liturgy that was not in some way or another offensive.

Sometimes "inclusive language" has been carried to the point of distorting the biblical text, as when the rejected poor man in the Epistle of Saint James was turned into a poor woman. On the other side, one conservative priest thought that the way to stimulate devotion for Pentecost was to turn up the amplification. Is it a mark of spiritual sickness not to like loud music on a Sunday morning?

But most of the horrors exhibited neither a conservative nor a liberal tendency. Often the coffee hour invaded the service through over-zealous efforts to get people to socialize. (In one case, greeting people on the other side of the church replaced the sermon.) One Good Friday sermon was devoted to an account of the priest's shopping expedition; another included embarrassing gossip about an altar server, and a renewal of wedding vows touched upon the husband's toilet habits. The topper: a sermon that described the boy Jesus' remark about being on his Father's business in the temple as "smart-alecky," and suggested that Mary could have handled the situation better if she had had an introductory psychology class.

We have tried Uniate and other ethnic churches, but not with much success. At one such church we were told never to forget that we were both Christians and Lebanese; at another we were asked to take an oath of loyalty to the bishops of Lithuania.

Praise God, it is still possible, with some effort, to find the Eucharist celebrated with due reverence. But perhaps not for long, since there are so many people in power in the church who regard the worship of a transcendent God rather than other members of the congregation as a heresy.

PHILIP E. DEVINE
Providence, R.I.

A different view

Contrary to your report from London, the Brompton Oratory is neither ugly nor gaudy; on a recent visit I found it a beautiful memorial to the English Martyrs. True, the main altar may be a bit far from the people.

In October I visited both Chartres and Notre Dame cathedrals, also mentioned by your contributor. It is true that Chartres has adapted well to the liturgical changes, with a beautiful chapel for the Blessed Sacrament. But in Notre Dame the sacrament was reserved on a plywood stand just to the right of the altar of sacrifice; it was covered with a white "cozy" so that it looked like my mother's old GE mixer with its cover on. People were milling about; our Lord's presence was not properly reverenced.

TERENCE E. MOORE, M.D.
Kitanning, Pa.

Liturgical fallbacks

The liturgies described by your writers were not representative of rural or small-town America. We are using

(Continued on page 28)

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A fragile fix

The last-minute reprieve for Saddam Hussein, negotiated by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, has forestalled certain military action against Iraq by the United States—at least unless and until Iraq once more blatantly impedes the work of the UN arms inspectors. Most knowledgeable observers agree that whether Iraq will cheat is not in question, only when. Iraq's envoy to the UN has already begun to undermine the authority of Richard Butler, the chairman of the UN's inspection program, by asserting that diplomats, not Butler's professionals, will control the inspections of so-called "presidential palaces." In short, it seems clear that the dilemma of what to do about Iraq's possession of biological and chemical weapons and defiance of the UN has not been resolved, but only put on hold.

It is equally obvious that no one, including the Clinton administration, was very happy with the idea of a punitive bombing campaign. A fearsome toll could have been extracted from Iraqi military forces and capabilities—and doubtless that reality was what induced Saddam to back down from his demands for limiting the scope of UN inspections. When dealing with a regime like Iraq's, a willingness to use force is indispensable to keeping the peace and to bringing about some measure of international order and justice. As Secretary General Annan said about his own dealings with Iraq, "You can do a lot with diplomacy, but of course you can do a lot more with diplomacy backed up by firmness and force."

Still, bombing would almost inevitably have inflicted civilian casualties on a population already impoverished by seven years of UN economic sanctions and terrorized for decades by its putative leader. Worse, although bombing would have weakened Iraq's conventional military power, it was unlikely to destroy much, if any, of the regime's biological and chemical capability. In short, containing Iraq and the threat its weapons of mass destruction present to the stability of the entire region is going to continue to be a kind of high-stakes poker game where all parties involved are unwilling to leave the table but desperate not to have their bluffs called.

Many fair-minded people are uncomfortable with the preeminent role the United States seems fated to play in this and other international conflicts. What would be lost, they ask, if the U.S. relented, allowing the weapons inspections and the sanctions to be ended? Isn't Iraq bankrupt and militarily impotent at this point? Does it present a real threat to its neighbors? Is not continuing to impose such suffering on the Iraqi people out of all proportion to whatever good the sanctions might achieve in hobbling Iraq's war machine?

There are no easy answers to these questions. Certainly, the Clinton administration must make a more persuasive and consistent case to the American people and to the international community concerning the imperative of disarming Iraq. However, it is important to repeat again that the principal obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people is Saddam Hussein's regime, not the sanctions or U.S. policy concerning weapons inspection. Iraq's conventional military power has indeed been significantly reduced. But what complicates any just-war assessment of proportionality is the disproportionate danger posed by biological

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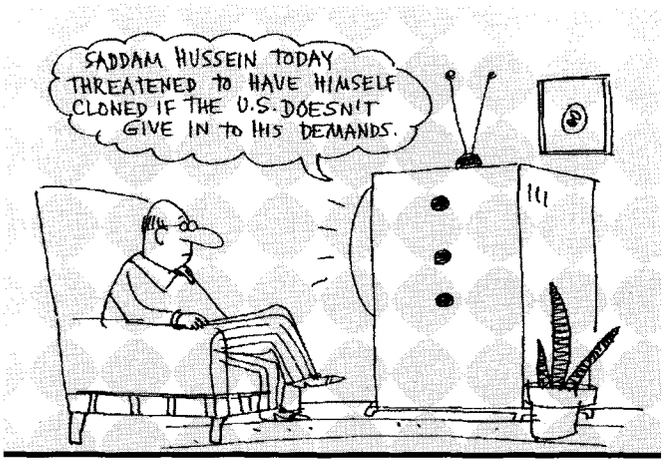

and chemical weapons—the fact that only a few such weapons can endanger the lives of millions, and perhaps the very peace of the world. Yes, other nations possess similar weapons. However, no other nation but Iraq has *demonstrated* a willingness to use them.

Moreover, in trying to assess the magnitude of the threat presented by Iraq's refusal to account for all its weapons, some important facts bear repeating. It should be remembered that the UN has documented that during the 1991 Gulf War Iraq built and loaded twenty-five germ warheads using botulinum toxin, anthrax, and aflatoxin on missiles capable of striking targets 400 miles away. As well as threatening U.S. forces, Iraq targeted Israel with these missiles and with remote-controlled planes equipped with germ bombs. Thankfully, none were launched. However, Iraq has yet to account for at least 150 of those weapons. The likely consequence of any possible future attack on Israel—the retaliatory use of nuclear weapons—certainly represents a far greater threat to Iraqi civilians than either sanctions or any limited U.S. bombing campaign.

There are moral limits to what the U.S. should do and practical limits to what it can do about Iraq. But doing all that can justly be done to deprive Saddam Hussein of weapons of mass destruction remains one of the best ways the U.S. can advance peace in the Middle East.

OF SEVERAL MINDS

WILLIAM PFAFF

A NEW IMPERIALISM?

Free markets have cultural costs

A war between economic societies is going on. It is a war which may prove as important to modern history as the rise and fall of imperialism and colonialism. The United States, ambivalently backed by Europe and Canada, is attempting to force the replacement of crucial economic and social institutions in the non-Western world with institutions drawn from its own experience and that of Western Europe.

This campaign is inspired by American economic theory, promoted by American economic and business publicists, and waged by America's industry, commerce, and government. Its goal is deregulation and integration of the world economy, so as to impose the economic standards and practices, and, in important respects, the manner of life, of the capitalist West.

The campaign originated in the struggle against the Communist economic model. Until the 1980s, many in the West believed that the Communist model, in its Russian and Chinese versions, could defeat the West. Such was the concern of an influential 1975 Trilateral Commission study. However, a decade later Soviet Communism collapsed of its internal contradictions, both political and economic, as George Kennan and a few others had foreseen. Many then argued that the East Asian economic model in Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan was superior to the Western model, and that the United States should try to adopt its practices.

In purely economic terms, the centrally directed East Asian model for national industrial mobilization was a much more serious challenge than the Leninist planned economy had been. But it, too, had, and has, an internal contradiction: its dependence upon export-led growth is ultimately irreconcilable with its protectionism.

In Japan, where the East Asian model originated, the nation's ability to adapt its economic system to changing circumstances in the 1990s was handicapped by the country's political lethargy, a legacy of World War II and of the cold war. Japan's success in the future will undoubtedly depend more on political reform than on economic adaptation.

The East Asian model, of course, should not be confused with the essentially feudal economic system which exists in Indonesia and some other Southeast Asian countries. In these countries, resources and industry are controlled by family or clients of the ruler, or of the ruling political class, who in turn enrich Western investors prepared to pay the required tribute. China today is probably closer to this feudal model than to East Asian capitalism. What such societies need is not the deregulation urged by Western financial institutions and governments, but the opposite: uncorrupt and disinterested regulation.

The East Asian model will be modified in the course of the present crisis, but it is reasonable to believe that it will survive with its fundamentals unchanged. It is a legitimate outgrowth of East Asian social institutions, developed over the course of the region's history. Elsewhere in Asia, the lasting consequences of the present economic crisis may be more destructive. Those who

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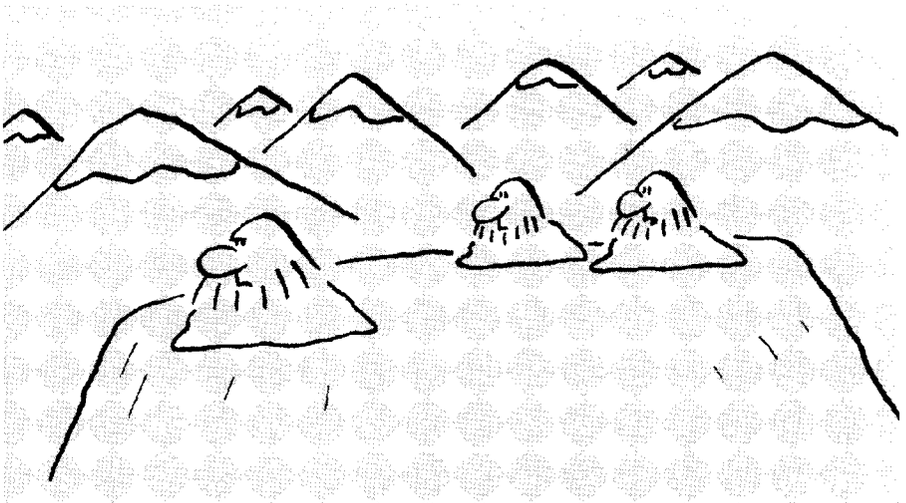
expect the crisis to result in a widespread adoption of something resembling the American market economy, however, are mistaken. Western capitalism's intellectual and moral foundations have been Western Christianity and Enlightenment liberalism. The moral foundations of East and Southeast Asian civilizations have been religiously based hierarchical political structures and patriarchal social and family structures. These lie behind both the East Asian economic model and Asian economic feudalism. They now are under implicit attack from the West.

Western colonialism, in its day, was a moral challenge to Asian civilizations. More recently, in China (and Vietnam, North Korea, and Cambodia), an imported Marxism attempted to destroy inherited moral structures. Now the attack once again comes from the West.

The West's drive toward globalization demands elimination of "backward," "inward-looking," "protectionist" structures in other societies, so as to incorporate the members of those societies into the Western-dominated global economy as consumers and producers—to the West's advantage, obviously. Otherwise the West would not be doing it.



"He's developed a rather eccentric ethical philosophy. He says money is everything."

This is dangerous, just as colonialism was dangerous. Colonialism undermined and sometimes destroyed the moral underpinnings of colonized peoples, producing violent reactions. In the end the empires withdrew, but they left a great deal of wreckage, and in some places a legacy of hate. The new Western offensive means no damage. But it is a war of society and culture, and causes damage. The damage has political consequences. That does not seem really understood today. □

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LaVonne Neff

POWERFUL MEN

When philandering becomes misogyny

"Of course, this isn't about sex. It's about possible obstruction of justice." "Clinton's sex life is his own business. What matters is whether he's doing what we elected him to do." "If his wife can live with him, why should we care?"

Gosh, we're all so grown-up. Sex may have been all we thought about in the late sixties, but we're far beyond that now. If it weren't for those questions of perjury and the electoral mandate, we would certainly not be watching all those prurient commentators, now would we?

Well, I for one find sex fascinating, and having been grounded by the flu just when Monica hit the airwaves, I relentlessly watched the alleged scandal unfold. I confess I've been startled to hear countless fastidious people denying any interest in Clinton's sex life (though at parties, after a drink or two, they begin calling him the Unabanger, and worse). This is not because I'm a Clinton-basher. I voted for him twice, and I hope he is eventually found to be pure as the driven snow. But I am really watching because I am amazed at women's willingness to overlook men's perfidy.

The subtext of *l'affaire Clinton* is that old law of nature: the most powerful male can have all the females he wants. In the West he is unlikely to have a state-supported harem, but he is allowed to keep a wife, a mistress, and any number of sexual servants at his disposal. Who allows him to do this? We all do—especially when we say that allegations of sexual misconduct are relatively unimportant, as long as the alleged perpetrator tells the truth about them.

If the top baboon can have all the females he wants, it's clear where he's sitting. His bright pink rump is planted firmly on the glass ceiling. Look up, women: you can't miss it. If you're young and nubile, he may beckon to you. Take a breathtaking ride up the elevator past that glass barrier, right into the inner sanctum of power. Make him feel good and be rewarded with small gifts and better jobs. Afterward, as you fly past your plainer colleagues on your way to the basement, console yourself: at least you have seen the view from the top baboon's penthouse, while they—with all their integrity and hard work and brains—will never get past the barrier.

Well, one of them might. For there is also a top female: the wife. She may be powerful in her own right. She certainly shares her husband's glory. She bears his children, speaks for him when he cannot be present, counsels him at

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will. And she can live above the glass ceiling for life—as long as she does not mind the eager young things getting off and on the elevator.

According to one school of thought, men will behave if their wives play a prescribed role to perfection, whether the role be domesticity and maternity or professionalism and assertiveness. If men do not behave, it is because their women have somehow failed. Perhaps this idea works with lesser baboons (though it seems hardly fair to blame one person for another's misbehavior), but the top baboon does not generally subscribe to it. Their wives' dazzling beauty did not keep the husbands of Jacqueline Kennedy or Diana, Princess of Wales, from finding extracurricular interests. Brilliance did not protect Eleanor Roosevelt from the other woman; gentle reticence was no safeguard for Mamie Eisenhower; political astuteness was insufficient for Lady Bird Johnson. Did all these women simply make poor choices? Coretta Scott King and Kasturbai Gandhi married saints, but both had to endure the elevator that kept delivering fresh women (Gandhi, who presumably was not after power, also claimed not to be after sex: he wanted naked young women in his bed so he could strengthen his character by saying no).

Back in 1964, the year Hillary Rodham graduated from high school and a year after publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Jack Jones was crooning to nervous housewives: "Hey, little girl, comb your hair, fix your make-up...." You'd better look good when your husband walks in the door, advised Hit Number 14, "Wives and Lovers," because "day after day, there are girls at the office, and men will always be men." Is that really what it means to be a man—to be unable to resist attractive women? And are the only possible female responses either to "Stand by Your Man," if you're directly involved, or to argue that adults can do whatever they like sexually, so long as they're otherwise fulfilling their job descriptions?

I'll agree with the prevailing wisdom on one point: the current scandal is not about sex. But it's not about perjury either. It's about power. With enough power, we apparently still believe, a man can have all the women he wants. Some will throw themselves at him; others will be more subtle. Very few will turn him down, and virtually nobody will kiss and tell. And through it all, the wife smiles graciously and makes excuses.

This scandal is also about self-respect. Women—whether single or married, professionals or homemakers—are not tokens of winning, like poker chips, and we demean ourselves when we speak of adultery, sexual compulsiveness, and harassment as peccadilloes. I don't know how, when, or if women are going to get past the glass ceiling. It is more likely to happen in our lifetime, however, if we have the courage to say that philandering is misogyny. It's time to stop making excuses for men who see women as prizes in the power game—playmates, not players. □

LaVonne Neff *is executive book editor at Loyola Press in Chicago.*

David K. O'Rourke

OUR WAR WITH MEXICO

Rereading Guadalupe Hidalgo

The war between the United States and Mexico ended 150 years ago this past February, but in some sense the struggle has continued by other means. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded nearly one-half of Mexico to the United States—1 million square miles encompassing what are now the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, most of Colorado, and part of Wyoming. Though the territorial shift was enormous, the treaty itself was temperate. It guaranteed the civil, religious, and property rights of Mexican citizens in the ceded territory. They were presumed to be Americans, at least legally, if they did not leave or register as Mexicans within one year. Article IX declared that the Mexicans in the ceded territories "shall be incorporated into the United States of America, and admitted as soon as possible, according to the principles of the Federal Constitution, to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States. In the meantime, they shall be maintained and protected in the enjoyment of their liberty and property, and the civil rights now vested in them according to the Mexican laws."

One major complication for the United States was that the Mexican Constitution of 1824 had granted citizenship to the Indians in Mexico. Presumably that would have meant that the Native Americans in the ceded territory shared in all the legal protections guaranteed by the treaty. But within the American territories, they were treated, in effect, as foreigners, members of other nations. Hostile actions on their part against Americans or American-owned property were judged to be acts of war.

In the century-and-a-half since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo many Westerners have preferred not to see the vast numbers of Hispanics living in what was once part of Mexico or acknowledge their rights as U.S. citizens. In fact, in California, many people seem to have difficulty admitting that there are more than 8 million Hispanics living among

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us. The defeat in 1996 of House Republican Robert Dornan by Loretta Sanchez in Southern California was greeted at first by astonishment and then by the charge from some that the defeat by a Hispanic of an established "white" politician could have been brought about only by fraud.

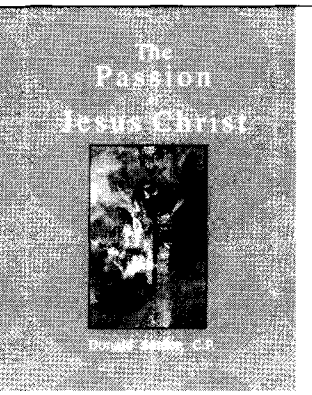
A profound racism has long colored American attitudes toward Hispanics. Historian Francis Parkman begins his classic story of the American frontier, *The Oregon Trail*, with this description of a group of Hispanics his party encountered on leaving Saint Louis in 1846: "On the muddy shore stood some thirty or forty slavish-looking Spaniards, gazing stupidly out from underneath their broad hats." He contrasted them with a nearby frontiersman, "a tall, strong figure, with a clear blue eye and an open, intelligent face," whom Parkman saw as a symbol of "that race of restless and intrepid pioneers whose axes and rifles have opened a path from the Alleghenies to the western prairies," and who, in his view, would soon cut a path through other "slavish-looking Spaniards" on the road to Mexico City. A decade later, Stephen A. Douglas, in his debates with Lincoln, referred to "the amalgamation of white men and Indians and Negroes we have seen in Mexico" as justification for his support of racial segregation. President James Buchanan called the Mexicans a "mongrel race."

The dividing issue in the United States over the war with Mexico was slavery and its containment or expansion. The divisions which ultimately led to the Civil War even then ran deep. John Quincy Adams, still in Congress at age eighty-two, thought the war with Mexico a shameless land-grab. And it was over the war that Thoreau refused to pay his taxes, spent a symbolic night in jail in protest, and wrote his classic essay on "Civil Disobedience." The opposition to the war was so great in many parts of the country that President Polk's Democrats lost badly in the congressional election of 1846, even as reports of General Winfield Scott's victory were coming in, and then lost the presidential election in 1848 as well. Though the war's conclusion, in fact, did not bring about the expansion of slavery, it introduced the idea of race as a basis for civil status. The racism that slavery nourished, the animosities that fed the war, and the land-greed it unleashed often ended up victimizing the Mexican and Native American people who lived in the ceded territory.

Anti-Hispanic attitudes are still alive and well here in the far West. In much of the United States affirmative action is seen principally as an African-American issue, but in California the focus is Hispanic. The fact that Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law enrolled only one new African-American student this past year, down from twenty the previous year, made the national news. The fact that the enrollment of Hispanic students fell from twenty-two to six in a state where Hispanics make up one-fourth of the population was practically overlooked.

The repeal of California's affirmative-action law and the anti-immigrant attitudes that have gained popular support are part of this anti-Hispanic sentiment. It arises, I suspect, from the same kind of fear that greeted other ethnic groups, especially the Irish in the nineteenth century, as they moved from mere presence to positions of political and economic power. The Irish, however, were truly immigrants. They came here to start a new life, and chose to adapt to the customs and demands of their new home. Hispanics, to the contrary, are very much aware that "they were here before us," and do not see themselves as foreigners. While there may be pragmatic adaptations to American laws and customs, the border with Mexico is seen as a bureaucratic line, and a porous one at that, given how many families have members on both sides.

Even given these anti-Hispanic attitudes, their entry into political life is moving ahead. One leader I spoke with recently described it as "slow and steady, but with a difference." The difference is that the political offices, such as school boards and city and town councils, are chosen not for their high profile but for their effects on family and neighborhood life. He added that, given the numbers of Hispanics, it is just a matter of time before they achieve higher office. I suspect that life in these parts is going to be very interesting when that happens. □



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THE GOD OF SILENCE

Shusaku Endo's reading of the Passion

William T. Cavanaugh

A tree which flourishes in one kind of soil may wither if the soil is changed. As for the tree of Christianity, in a foreign country its leaves may grow thick and the buds may be rich, while in Japan the leaves wither and no bud appears. Father, have you never thought of the difference in the soil, the difference in the water?

Shusaku Endo's *Silence*

The difference in the soil, the difference in the water, are what haunt the life and writings of Shusaku Endo, the great Japanese novelist who died in 1996. Endo was seared by the terrible homelessness of being a Christian in Japan, and most commentary on his work focuses on the awkward encounter of Christianity and Japanese culture. However, Endo is misunderstood if this struggle is limited to a Japanese context. What Endo was *really* after, I think, was nothing less than a glimpse of a homeless God.

Endo's work can be read as a profound exploration of the twisted logic of the Incarnation—the journey of God from heaven to be emptied into earthly flesh and the assumption of weakness by omnipotence. Endo's personal struggle as a Christian in Japan was the setting for his investigation of the paradox central to the lives of all Christians: the paradox of a crucified God. Thus Endo weaves together the spiritual anguish of his characters with an embattled and paradoxically orthodox theology. Here I want to examine Endo's theological search in his novel *Silence* and invite other Christian voices—including that of John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis splendor*—into the novel's strange moral universe.

Lean and spare, the prose of *Silence* captures the most harrowing anguish with a stark restraint. Suffering, sacrifice, and God's own silence lie at the heart of the novel. A deep moral ambiguity suffuses the story and opens a wound that endures long after the reader puts the book down. Moreover, I think Endo would argue that this wound is not one created by the writer, but belongs to the one who returned to his disciples after the Resurrection, asking his disciples to probe his unhealed wounds. It is this God who refuses to close the wound. He has chosen not to eliminate suffering, but to suffer with humanity. It is this Jesus who haunts Father Sebastian Rodrigues, the main character of *Silence*.

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Rodrigues is a Portuguese Jesuit. He risks his life by going to Japan at a time when the small Japanese Christian minority is being fiercely persecuted. Rodrigues is motivated by a missionary concern for peasant Christians who have persevered in their faith in a clandestine church without priests. But he has a more personal motivation as well. His Jesuit mentor, the great provincial Cristovao Ferreira, the man who imbued Rodrigues with a fiery passion to spread the gospel in the face of every danger, has apostatized under torture. Rodrigues goes to Japan to face probable martyrdom, in part to discover the truth about Ferreira, and in part to offer himself as atonement for the unspeakable affront of apostasy.

Ferreira's apostasy is a historical fact. Francis Xavier had brought Christianity to Japan in 1549. In a mere thirty years a community of 150,000 Christians was flourishing. However, the unification of Japan under a central governing power in the late sixteenth century was accompanied by an increasing suspicion toward foreigners. Persecution erupted periodically, culminating in an edict of expulsion for all foreign missionaries in 1614. In the following years priests and ordinary Christians were ruthlessly suppressed. At first, Christians were publicly executed, but the blood of such martyrs, to paraphrase Tertullian, proved to be the seed of the church's persistence. At its height, the Japanese Christian community numbered 300,000. Eventually, however, the magistrates

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hit upon a sinister torture designed to change the public spectacle from one of a heroic acceptance of death to an ignominious public renunciation of faith. The torture, called the *ana-tsurushi*, consisted of hanging the victim upside down in a pit. A small incision made on the victim's forehead allowed blood to drain, thus intensifying the agony. Still, no missionary apostatized until 1632. But when Cristovao Ferreira, leader of the mission in Japan, did so under torture, the blow to the remaining Christians was devastating.

In *Silence*, Endo's fictional Ferreira serves as a goad to Rodrigues's pride. It is Rodrigues's pride, hidden behind his self-abnegating journey toward martyrdom, that sets up the climactic scene in the novel. As he sets his face toward Japan, Rodrigues writes in dread-filled yet fascinated tones of the perils that await him. Rodrigues is haunted, and feels himself pulled toward Japan, by a vivid vision of the face of Christ. Endo compels us to admire the Jesuit's willingness to face up to any torture for the sake of the gospel, and we have no doubt that he has the strength to die for Christ. But the novelist subtly lets Rodrigues overplay his courage until it touches on pride. In the end, the Jesuit risks violating the church's stern admonition that a Catholic must never seek martyrdom.

The antithesis of Rodrigues is Kichijiro, the Japanese who serves as his guide. Kichijiro is a cringing, lying, cowardly drunkard, a thoroughly untrustworthy character who sports the expression of a beaten dog, yet with a hint of cunning. Though Kichijiro denies being a Christian, gradually we learn his secret: he, too, is an apostate. His entire family had been brought before the magistrates and given the customary chance to apostatize by treading on an image of Christ's face called a *fumie*. Kichijiro was the only one to submit. He later watched his brothers and sisters being burned at the stake. Rodrigues regards him with a mixture of annoyance, contempt, and pity.

What is remarkable about the novel is the way in which, as Rodrigues and Kichijiro move through the countryside eluding capture, Endo begins to blur the sharp moral line which separates them. Rodrigues's presence, much like that of Graham Greene's whisky priest, brings terrible suffering and death to the faithful who harbor him. As Kichijiro, Rodrigues, and the reader look to God for some relief from the unrelenting suffering, Endo allows the Jesuit to articulate the theological problem which gives the novel its name. Rodrigues writes:

> Everything our Lord does is for our good. And yet, even as I write these words I feel the oppressive weight in my heart of the last stammering words of Kichijiro on the morning of his departure: "Why has Deus Sama imposed this suffering on us?"... I suppose I should simply cast from my mind these meaningless words of the coward; yet why does his plaintive voice pierce my breast with all the pain of a sharp needle? Why has our Lord imposed this torture and this persecution on poor Japanese peasants? No, Kichijiro was trying to express something different, something even more sickening. The silence of God.

Rodrigues watches as two Christian peasants are tied to stakes and left for the ocean's waves to bring a slow, merciless death. The martyrdom he has read about in his native Portugal is a glorious thing, a triumphant ascension to paradise accompanied by the sound of angels blowing their trumpets. But the martyrdom he witnesses in Japan is a miserable and squalid affair. And while the voices of the peasants cry out in anguish, "God remains with folded arms, silent."

Rodrigues's growing doubts stand against the backdrop of the enduring faith of the peasants. However, rather than soothe his doubts, Rodrigues finds the simple faith of the peasants a further irritant. The more the peasants suffer for their faith, the more Rodrigues seems to recoil from the whole missionary enterprise. Against his will, he begins to struggle with the idea that faith is a mere escape from reality; worse, he is haunted by the dim awareness that the suffering of the peasants is increased because of his own presence. And much worse still, their faith now appears as a cruel burden laid on them by a God who refuses to speak.

More than half of *Silence* takes place in prison. Rodrigues is betrayed by Kichijiro for a few silver pieces, but then Kichijiro visits him in jail and confesses his weakness and apostasy. If only he had died before the persecution began, Kichijiro whimpers, he would have gone to heaven as a good Christian. Why has God made him weak, then set him in such an awful time of persecution? Rodrigues finds it im-

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possible even to identify the strength and beauty of evil in the filthy and foul-smelling Kichijiro. Suppressing disgust, he gives Kichijiro absolution, then hurriedly retreats to his bed. There he recalls how Christ sought out even the most unattractive and despised of people, those whom no one else could love. Rodrigues again sees the face of Christ, and he is filled with shame.

At this point in the novel, the Christian reader is still in a recognizable moral universe. Ah yes, we think, this is the paradox of the cross. The Christian imperative is to love even that which is poor and despised in the world's eyes. But in the agonizing dilemma which sets up the climax of the novel, Endo turns even this paradox inside out. The dilemma is remarkably simple. Ferreira appears, in the employ of the Japanese magistrates, and reveals the reason for his apostasy. Christian peasants had been hung in the pit, and Ferreira was told that they would not be released until he denied his faith. The same choice now faces Rodrigues. Three peasants hang in the pit moaning piteously. Unless Rodrigues tramples on the *fumie*, on the face of Christ that he has loved for so long, the peasants will die a slow and terrible death.

The dilemma itself may be simple, but the questions it raises are not. Can a Christian let others suffer for his beliefs? One thinks of precedents in Christian history. For example, the martyr Perpetua refused to deny Christ, even though her infant son would thereby never know his mother. Endo hints that the peasants in the pit have already apostatized, but will not be saved unless Rodrigues follows suit. The Japanese magistrates believe that the key to choking off the Christian communities is to target the priests. Can the peasants be made to suffer for Rodrigues's faith?

The deeper issue here is suffering for the sake of Christ. Jesus makes clear in the Gospels that his followers must take up their cross. As Jesus says in Luke, "They will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name."

Thanks be to God?

As perhaps only a novel can, *Silence* probes the strangeness of the Incarnation and death of Christ, the mystery of a God who does not simply wipe away the world's suffering, but chooses to share in it. This goes to the heart of Rodrigues's questions about God's silence. Why does God not speak in the face of so much human agony? How can God sit and do nothing, arms folded, while innocent and simple people not only die, but die in God's name? Endo drops hints that Rodrigues is tempted to apostatize to save the peasants, precisely because he believes God will not save them; he has lost his faith in God to save.

On the other hand, Endo suggests that Rodrigues does *indeed* hear God break the silence. Rodrigues imagines he hears the voice of Christ speaking from the *fumie*: "Trample! It was to be trampled on by men that I was born into this world. It was to share men's pain that I carried my cross." God *has* spoken to the suffering of the world in giving the Word, Jesus Christ, made incarnate to suffer the pain of humanity. Ferreira puts the argument to Rodrigues: "A priest ought to live in imitation of Christ....Certainly Christ would have apostatized for [these peasants]."

The early Christians regarded murder, adultery, and apostasy as the three most heinous crimes; many commentators considered apostasy to be the "sin against the Holy Spirit" that in Matthew 12:32 Jesus says cannot be forgiven. Could Jesus himself have apostatized, that is, denied himself, as Rodrigues imagines he is told to do?

Equally intriguing is the problem of squaring Rodrigues's apostasy with John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis splendor*. There the pope is at great pains to stem a tide of proportionalist Catholic moral theology that appears to measure the consequences of an act before determining if it is evil. In condemning proportionalism, John Paul puts forth the traditional doctrine of "intrinsic evils." Certain acts, in other words, are evil *"always and per se*...quite apart from the ulterior intentions of the one acting and the circumstances." Presumably apostasy would be an intrinsically evil act. The pope includes an examination of martyrdom in his encyclical, with the implication that it is only because certain moral truths cannot be compromised—regardless of the circumstances—that Christians would be willing to go to their deaths to defend them. Otherwise martyrdom makes no sense.

In effect, *Silence* asks if there is only one kind of martyrdom. Could one sacrifice not only one's body, but one's very moral integrity for the sake of others? The novelist gently inflates Rodrigues's pride precisely to raise this question. The Jesuit seeks physical martyrdom as a prize. He wants to atone for the sin of Ferreira and share in a martyr's glorious triumph over sin and death. But Endo suggests that a deeper martyrdom may await Rodrigues—the death of his very self as a Christian and as a moral person. This suggests that the standard concept of heroic virtue is radically effaced by the logic of God's *kenosis*, by God's self-emptying to take the form of a slave, as Paul puts it in Philippians. In *Silence*, Endo provocatively pushes basic Christian logic, already paradoxical, to a more extreme conclusion. If it is true, as many Christian martyrs have affirmed, that for the Christian, the body is as nothing when compared to the eternity of the soul, then is the crucifixion of the soul a martyrdom which makes other martyrdoms pale in comparison?

Those who look for tidy endings should not read *Silence*. Endo is not interested in deciding if Rodrigues did the right thing. *Silence* is a meditation on the Incarnation, not a manual of morals. Christ comes not to solve the world's problems, but to redeem it. For Endo, the only consolation for the continuing torment of human beings is the strange drama of a homeless God who suffers with us. It is precisely in this apparent silence, in this self-emptying, that salvation unfolds. □

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Celia Wren

BY THE BOOK

'Man Who Was Thursday,' 'Diary of Anne Frank'

A few months ago, two shrewd ballet companies co-produced a dance version of *Dracula*. The success of the vampire ballet is a curious—not to say monstrous—instance of a story sliding out of one artistic cubbyhole into another: changing genres. Popular culture churns out examples of the same phenomenon. Cinema engenders television shows, and *vice versa*; movie heroes wend their way through the liquid crystal of a video game; a book by Jane Austen or Henry James shoots up through the best-seller lists, fueled by box-office adrenaline.

Playwrights and theatrical producers also scrounge from other genres. Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard* appropriated the plot and characters of a classic film. Last year, a run-down Times Square theater housed a dramatic interpretation of T. S. Eliot's poem *The Wasteland*. And a fleeting New York musical titled *Clue* took its inspiration—yes—from the board game. But a more common alchemy, of course, translates a full-length book to the stage, inviting well-read viewers to decide whether the drama is faithful to the original text.

Recently, several New York productions have cast light on what it means for a play to be true—in mood and message—to the book it is based on. A particularly interesting adaptation, on an intimate scale, flourished briefly at the avant-garde forum P. S. 122. G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), is probably best known for the stories featuring the sage detective Father Brown. More audaciously fantastic, however, is his 1908 caper *The Man Who Was Thursday*, which shares the Father Brown series's emphasis on "mystery" in its broadest sense. This metaphysical thriller spirals out madly from a marvelous premise: a London counterintelligence chief has formed a corps of "policemen who are also philosophers." An initiate tells the book's hero Gabriel Syme: "The ordinary detective goes to pot-houses to arrest thieves; we go to artistic tea-parties to detect pessimists. The ordinary detective discovers from a ledger or a diary that a crime has been committed. We discover from a book of sonnets that a crime will be committed....We say that the most dangerous criminal now is the entirely lawless modern philosopher."

Soon after joining these vigilantes, Syme stumbles upon an anarchist conspiracy to destroy civilization and morality itself. Phantasmagoric escapades proliferate, and police pursuit collides with the carnivalesque nature of the universe.

The daring of the theatrical troupe, Great Small Works, in staging this madcap romp, is itself admirable. Even more impressive is the considerable success of director Mark Sussman, movement director Clarinda MacLow, and colleagues, in approximating, with the aid of scenic projections and a few wigs and masks, the novel's atmosphere of hallucinatory suspense. In a 1936 newspaper column, Chesterton chided readers who detected in *The Man Who Was Thursday* a clear-cut allegory about God and man. The book is subtitled "A Nightmare," he pointed out; readers should not expect too much logic.

Despite rather naïve acting, and the unnecessary interpolation into the script of texts by Jean Genet, Emma Goldman, and others, the recent production did capture the flavor of nightmare. The performers' dancelike movements—jogging in place, or swaying as if buffeted by a slow-motion gale—steered the scenes away from naturalism, as did sets and props as primitive as a white scarf representing a snowstorm.

Shadow puppets (created by Stephen Kaplin) neatly met one of the challenges the adaptors faced: representing the anarchist council's demoniacal president, Sunday. In fact, the play version of *The Man Who Was Thursday* reflected the book's exuberant vision much as a shadow puppet pageant resembles the three-dimensional world: oversimplification, and a touch of awkwardness, did not compromise the similarity of contour. Book and play seemed to take two paths to—essentially—the same end.

Literary critics who try to pin down definitions of genre sometimes refer to a "horizon of expectations"—as if literary forms present contrasting landscapes for exploration. Knowing what to expect from each genre, the audience is able to orient itself.

Theatergoers who attend one of the season's most conspicuous productions—another play derived from a long prose text—may find controversy clouding the horizon. The revival of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, starring the sixteen-year-old film actress Natalie Portman, has been the focus of some debate, as the script itself has been, in fact, ever since its conception. Last October, a provocative *New Yorker* article by the writer Cynthia Ozick traced the play's trou-

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bled genesis, and related it to what Ozick unflatteringly dubbed the "Anne Frank industry."

Ozick's article relates how numerous critics, beginning in the 1950s, have damned the script penned by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, the married playwrighting team endorsed by Anne's father, Otto Frank. Detractors have charged that the play, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1955, downplays Jewish themes, avoids issues of moral responsibility, and replaces anguish with feel-good optimism, turning Anne from a real, suffering person into a spurious symbol of the triumphant human spirit. Summing up such weighty issues, Ozick wondered whether it would have been better for humanity had Anne's diary never been found.

With such obloquy as prologue, the current revival's many virtues—its buoyancy, its smooth and thrilling shifts in mood, its winning performances—may seem suspect. Ozick and other critics have faulted the play for inappropriate sunniness, and certainly this Anne Frank abounds in humor and charm. On her stomach on the floor, kicking her heels, or scampering about the kitchen, Portman makes an engaging Anne. And Linda Lavin, as the snooty Mrs. Van Daan, gives many of the early scenes, especially, a comic bounce.

But there are also moments of desolation in this production, which uses a revised version of the play, adapted by Wendy Kesselman. While addressing other flaws critics detect in the original Goodrich/Hackett version, the new rendition adds a final note detailing the fates of Anne (who died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp) and the other residents of the attic. In the silence that concludes the final scene, the lights dim, and lines of cursive begin to glow across the cutaway levels of the set. The play delivers us, finally, to the original text—the cramped letters of a young girl's script.

Viewers made too uneasy, by Ozick and other commentators, to enjoy this watchable production's wry portraits of fidgety human beings, may wish the director, James Lapine, had been able to synthesize forty years of mixed feelings about the play, *Anne Frank*. Such an integrating approach recently drew acclaim for the staging of another book with a troubled past: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This classic novel may be the most oft-adapted book in American theatrical history, and many a Stowe-inspired *mise en scène* has been prejudiced, patronizing, and vulgar.

A dynamic young company called the Drama Dept. recently performed an *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that both interpreted and commented upon portions of several different scripts, while lampooning dramatic traditions. Audiences found themselves confronting a century's worth of adaptors' blunders and travesties, as actors playing Little Eva or Topsy exaggerated the worst mannerisms of farce, minstrel shows, melodrama, and other historical styles. The spectacle provided a striking reminder of the dangers involved in shuffling stories from genre to genre—and not just stories set in Transylvania. □

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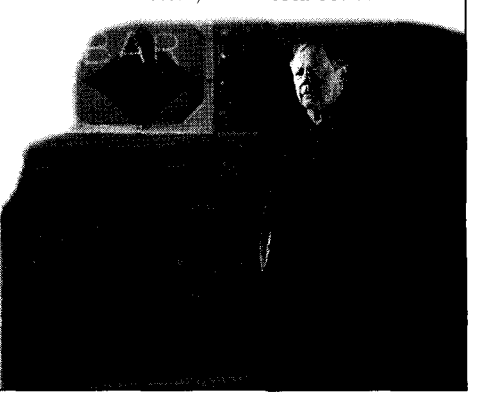

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A contented believer

Nearer, My God
An Autobiography of Faith
William F. Buckley, Jr.
Doubleday, $24.95, 313 pp.

Neil Coughlan

Despite its title, William F. Buckley, Jr.'s latest book is not an autobiography. Nor is it quite an autobiography of faith: Buckley's Roman Catholicism has not been the engine that has driven his course through life—journalism, writing, and politics have been. He is not Thomas Merton, not even Frank Sheed.

Buckley's book instead might have been titled *Why I Am a Catholic; Why It Makes Sense.* Buckley is Catholic because he was raised Catholic and because it has continued to ring true to him. His father, who was in his late forties when Buckley was born, was a highly successful venturing oilman, and a praying Catholic; his mother a daily communicant. Buckley was fifth or sixth of ten children and, it is clear, had a very happy childhood. The children were schooled at home by tutors or, if the family was traveling, in intervals at Catholic schools in Europe. Buckley himself, at the age of thirteen, had one important year in an English school conducted by warm and reasonable Jesuits. Certainly, by the time he was sent to a small Protestant (more or less) prep school near the family home in Sharon, Connecticut, it was unimaginable to Buckley to be anything other than Catholic. A postwar baccalaureate at Yale, notoriously, did nothing to change this.

The autobiography in Buckley's book ends here, forty pages in. The rest is episodes and topical essays—the intellectual content that Buckley has added to his Catholicism as an adult and on the occasion of writing this book. Buckley's root premise is that Revelation cannot finally contradict human reasoning. This is the dominant Roman Catholic position, and it fits nicely Buckley's indocile temperament and love of dialectics. He gives us, then, a review (with interesting reflections of his own) of classic Catholic apologetics: reasoned responses to the problems for belief posed by changes (or development) in church doctrine, bad popes (yawn), the church's support of the Inquisition, its acquiescence to slavery, the ghastly cruelty of eternal punishment (not reasonable, Buckley finds), the apparent incompatibility between divine omniscience and human free will. Other topics: the historicity of Jesus, his miracles, the Resurrection, Lourdes, theodicy, the lovability of God (an interesting one). One chapter is a lengthy vision of the event of Christ's Crucifixion. It is horrifying. Where each nail was driven in (first, the left wrist . . .), the particular agonies of the crucified as the cross is raised and dropped into place in its hole, the three hours of slow, conscious dying by bleeding and asphyxiation. Forty years ago,

such recitals were a staple of certain itinerant priests as they went from parish to parish preaching those Catholic minirevivals we called "missions." These dramatizations are out of fashion now, at least among American Catholics of European stock (they were abused and, I suppose, we've become too uptown), but the Crucifixion did occur, and it was like this. It is part of the Catholic deal, and Buckley does not shrink from it. Another chapter is an appreciation of Malcolm Muggeridge that concludes with a hilarious account of an audience Buckley, David Niven, and Muggeridge had with Pope John Paul II. The pope's staffers had failed him. He was completely mystified as to who this trio was—for all he knew they might as well have been the Musketeers.

The names in *Nearer, My God* tell much. The great English-language Catholic apologists: Cardinal Newman, Chesterton, Ronald Knox. Heroes and vessels of the American conservative, or reactionary, flowering in the 1940s and 1950s: Russell Kirk, Brent Bozell, *McCarthy and His Enemies*, Whittaker Chambers, *The National Review*, Fulton J. Sheen, Clare Booth Luce. In the 1980s and 1990s, more recent *National Review* editors such as Jeffrey Hart and high-church clergymen who have converted to Catholicism—George Rutler, Richard John Neuhaus. It should not be thought, however, that Buckley's Catholicism is an ossification or a clique. The din of the last thirty-five years has not made an Evelyn Waugh of him. He has gone along with the liturgical reforms and the move to the vernacular while questioning their premises. Women priests?—he thinks not. Married priests?—he's with the pope, but continues to reflect on the issue. Annulments, divorce?—he is a sympathetic companion to a church trying to muddle through. Con-

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traception? "When there is reliable evidence that the faithful are simply ignoring a stricture of the church, the loyalist reposes his hopes in the possibility that at some point in the future a pope will modify the reasoning of Pope Paul...or else that the principle being urged captures the moral imagination of the next generation of men and women, who will then abide by it."

Many of these are difficult questions for any thoughtful Catholic, and no less for a Buckley whose purpose in *Nearer, My God*, after all, is to say that orthodox Roman Catholicism is an appropriate and blessed life for a serious, intellectually rigorous modern. The book closes in exultation, however. *Nearer, My God*'s last chapter is a lovely memoir of his mother. And the penultimate chapter, the book's climax, is Buckley's account of his nephew Michael Bozell's recent ordination as a priest in a contemplative French Benedictine monastery where he will spend his life in prayer. The ceremony is a statement and celebration of the radical transfiguration that the Roman Catholic priesthood is, its profound distance from the lay state and, indeed, from other Catholic religious vocations. Buckley's heart is completely at ease here.

This is Buckley's Catholicism. He does not speak about his spiritual life in prayer, works, and the sacraments. He says this is because his natural discourse is argumentative, not devotional. I think it has more to do with his diffidence.

What is Buckley's Catholicism not? It is not dark. There is little of Pascal's terror before God; thanks to Christ and the church and the sacraments, salvation is there to be had. Many of the World War II-era converts to Catholicism, or to reaction, had despaired of man and politics. Not Buckley. In this regard, Whittaker Chambers, and even the Thomas Merton of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, are not his bedfellows. To Buckley, the world's our oyster. (Generally, one suspects him of happiness, and satisfaction.)

Buckley's Catholicism is liturgical, not evangelical. It is about whether individual souls will persist to salvation. Its devotional energy is private, not communal. There is little in *Nearer, My God* about a redemption of the *people* of God. Except for a claim that *Rerum novarum* (1891) inveighed not against capitalism but against materialism, there is not a word about the social and economic statements of the popes and the bishops, strong on human rights (Bill?...) and redistributionalist (oh). Of the worshiping congregation as a dynamic or mutually supportive body, nothing.

Buckley might want to rethink the reflex individualism of his Catholicism. Surely, he is the last person who would be content to see the church become just another fairly sizable Christian denomination. Charles Morris, in *American Catholic* (1997), has found that, for all the turmoil, the heterodoxy, the decline in numbers of clergy, Catholicism in America is flourishing in the parishes. (In the area of the country where I live large numbers of Catholics, not so much rejecting Catholic doctrine as seeking palpable, lively Christian communities for themselves and their children, have joined local Protestant churches—parishes, really.) It is clear in *Nearer, My God* that Buckley himself is at least liturgically active in his parish. I do not like to think what would become of a church that did not have Buckley's patrician, cerebral Catholicism in it. Inevitably, though, this is for relatively few of us. Tocqueville told us that individualism is what we *have* in America, and that it is communities and mutual support that we look for. □

Neil Coughlan *is a lawyer in Connecticut and the author of* Young John Dewey. *He is working with The Judicial Evaluation Institute for Economic Issues in Washington, D.C.*

THEOLOGY GETS GRAPHIC

The Illustrated Jesus through the Centuries
Jaroslav Pelikan
Yale University Press, $35, 254 pp.

Joseph Fete

As the phenomenal success of last year's "Glory of Byzantium" exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art attests, religious art continues to exert a powerful attraction even in a secular age. It is hard to say exactly why religious art in all media and genres is so popular. A hankering for the real behind the illusion? A restlessness that is quelled only when our "hearts rest in Thee"? Or is it an obsession with the visual and tactile? A demand created by television and computer screens for what can be taken in at a glance and does not demand to be read or wrestled with? Are we drawn to the icon or to the fleeting image?

Casting Jaroslav Pelikan in the role of curator for *The Illustrated Jesus through the Centuries* is a shrewd idea and for the most part the enterprise succeeds. *The Illustrated Jesus* is actually an expansion or visual supplement to Pelikan's well-received 1985 *Jesus through the Centuries*. Indeed, Pelikan advises the reader to return to the "text edition" for more complete exposition and documentation. In that sense, then, little need be said about the seventeen-year-old text. But the "little" that does need to be said also applies to Pelikan's magisterial multivolume work, *The Christian Tradition*. In neither *The Christian Tradi-*

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tion nor *The Illustrated Jesus* does Pelikan show much appreciation for the texts of Christian liturgies. Yet what the church confesses about the divinity and humanity of the person of Christ is most preciously distilled in its liturgies. Drink in this elixir from the Liturgy of John Chrysostom: "When your body was in the tomb, and your soul in hell, when you were in paradise with the thief, you were at the same time, O Christ, as God, upon your throne with the Father and the Holy Spirit, infinite and filling all things." A heady theological draught.

Happily, the graphic art that has replaced so much of Pelikan's 1985 text gives broader ground for this sort of theological reflection. Walk into any Orthodox or Eastern Rite church and the iconostasis transports you to heaven in time for the eternal liturgy. Much of the art reproduced in *The Illustrated Jesus* was inspired by or produced for Christian worship. Many of the Western paintings in this book existed previously as altar pieces, or continue to exist as wall or ceiling murals in churches and chapels, and help create the proper environment for worship.

Painting dominates the illustrations in this volume and they are beautifully reproduced. There is a good balance of Western and Eastern art, high and low, classical and popular. Mosaics and sculpture are underrepresented, perhaps because of the difficulty in reproducing them in a flat, printed medium. Western painting seems to predominate. In that regard, one is compelled to ask why pictures of the smoky and cracked frescoes of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel are used. Why not pictures of the brilliantly restored frescoes?

We are also reminded that some images are less conducive to theological insight than others. Looking at Warner Sallman's familiar "Head of Christ" alongside Matthias Grünewald's "Resurrection" from the Isenheim Altarpiece, or Rublev's "Old Testament Trinity," reveals that some religious art is inspired more by American advertising than by mystical experience.

The attention that Pelikan gives Christian art in this book also reminds us of the importance of giving equal weight to both the literary and the monumental or graphic sources of our tradition. No scholar who offered an interpretation of an ancient civilization based exclusively on literary evidence would be taken seriously. History that analyzes a culture's architecture and art is essential. Yet frequently these sources continue to be overlooked in theological investigation.

Of course, Pelikan's book is not offered to the "scholarly" market. It is accessible to anyone. Unfortunately, the lack of proper identification for some of the pictures creates occasional confusion. In a composite icon Basil the Great is identified; but who are the other mesmerizing figures? In a chapter that recounts the monumental contribution to theology by Augustine of Hippo, this bishop and teacher is pictured with Gregory the Great. But who's who? If one had access to a dictionary of iconographic symbolism one could figure such things out for oneself. Possessed of this tool one could also determine

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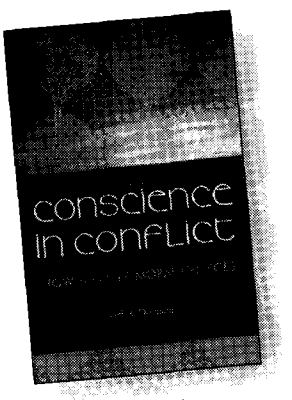

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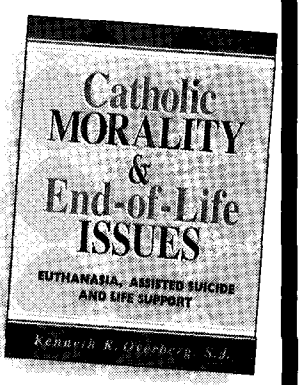

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that, contrary to the caption, the Lindau Gospels do not portray the four symbols of the Gospels.

Devotional prayer and meditation as well as the sacred liturgy have relied on the efficacy of "visual theology" since the time of the catacombs. In an increasingly pictorial age, the science of theology may now be tuning in to this visual channel. *The Illustrated Jesus* sets before us a theological feast for the eyes and whets our appetite for more about sacred art that is less opaque, less like a theology written in a foreign language. Yes, Sister Wendy has convinced us that art is for everybody and you don't need to be a Cambridge art historian to appreciate it. This volume returns us to the knowledge that art is more than pretty pictures—it is a way of doing theology. It is our Christian tradition. □

Monsignor Joseph Fete *is the rector of Saint Joseph Cathedral in Columbus, Ohio.*

LIMITED VISION

The New Religious Humanists
A Reader
Edited by Gregory Wolfe
The Free Press, $25, 306 pp.

David J. DeLaura

Early in this century, in an already post-Christian culture, the case for the reasonableness of Christianity was effectively made by G. K. Chesterton. After World War II, C. S. Lewis had a similar influence among serious readers; and T. S. Eliot remained a powerfully "prophetic" presence. Jacques Maritain, in works like *True Humanism* (1938), sought to preserve "Christian civilization" while upholding the dignity of workers in an enlightened capitalism. All four of these writers are cited in this collection, which is in effect a residual version of that much older project, but now in far less propitious circumstances.

Somewhat unsettlingly, the reader has to dig into the footnotes to see that the work of key contributors is most likely to appear in or cite "right" journals like *Commentary*, *Crisis*, *First Things*, and *The National Review*. This collection is, in effect, a serious statement from the still informal coalition of conservative Catholics and moderate Evangelicals and some other Protestants.

Editor Gregory Wolfe, sounding a hopeful note, seeks a middle ground between current extremes: on the one hand, the anti-intellectual Evangelicals, as well as the juggernaut of late twentieth-century "industrial capitalism"; and on the other, "secular" liberals, who have a parasitic relationship to traditional religion. His own special interest is with the Christian imagination as conveyed by reflective and "literary" writers. But unlike the more established figures he names, most of the younger writers he recommends will be scarcely known to readers. Wolfe is correct that the taboo against "religion" in the secular media has been relaxed in recent years. Still, even he admits, there is simply no "prophetic" voice now like Eliot (or Solzhenitsyn), and no "philosophical artist" comparable to Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy.

Two thoughtful essays deserve close attention. Glenn Tinder asks whether a responsible pluralism, still based on the "dignity and equality" of persons, could survive "if Christianity declines during the coming decades." Tinder voices a deep suspicion of "Enlightenment rationalism"—but he ignores that even thoughtful Christians will, inevitably, live in problematic interaction with modernity and all its post/post/post phases. More gratifyingly, Tinder argues for "responsible hope," over against the callousness and greed of "capitalist and bureaucratic institutions."

Os Guinness's principle of "covenantalism"—of citizens pursuing their interests but acting responsibly as members of a "commonwealth"—may seem abstract. But he rightly notes that the most fractious disputes pitting "social unity" against "religious liberty and diversity" occur in public school debates, ranging from school prayer to "textbook tampering." Guinness pleads for a "commitment to universal rights"; his weakness is a disdain for the bulk of the recalcitrant "issues" plaguing this society.

Here and there come flashes of scorn for expected topics like identity and gender politics, and multicultural curricula. But there are some pressing topics addressed in a few essays. Andrew Kimbrell invokes "a sacramental vision," calling for a total halt to "desacralizing technology," especially as applied to the human body—by fighting in the courts and legislatures. Frederica Mathewes-Green proposes the shared idea of "a world without abortion"; her shrewd strategy is to attack the extreme rhetoric of her fellow prolifers. Her recommendation of "simple friendship and support" for women with unwanted pregnancies may seem feeble in this fiercest of debates, but it may refocus the discussion. Vigen Guroian outlines "a contemporary ethic of death and dying" for the "postbiblical" near-future.

Of the nineteen essays, two pieces, finally, capture particularly well where "we" are, at the millennium. In his autobiographical *Hunger of Memory* (1982), Richard Rodriguez—by now perhaps one of the most influential Catholic commentators in this country—speaks, bleakly and movingly, of the liturgy as "a community of those who share with each other only the experience of standing alone before God." And antitechnology utopianism reaches its apex in an essay by Wendell Berry, who defends a biblical enviromentalism and attacks both "the industrialist's contempt or hatred for nature" and modern "organized

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Christianity's" lack of any "serious interest" in ecology. Berry's backward-looking turn to the green world aligns him with earlier machinery-hating social "prophets," from John Ruskin to William Morris to Eric Gill.

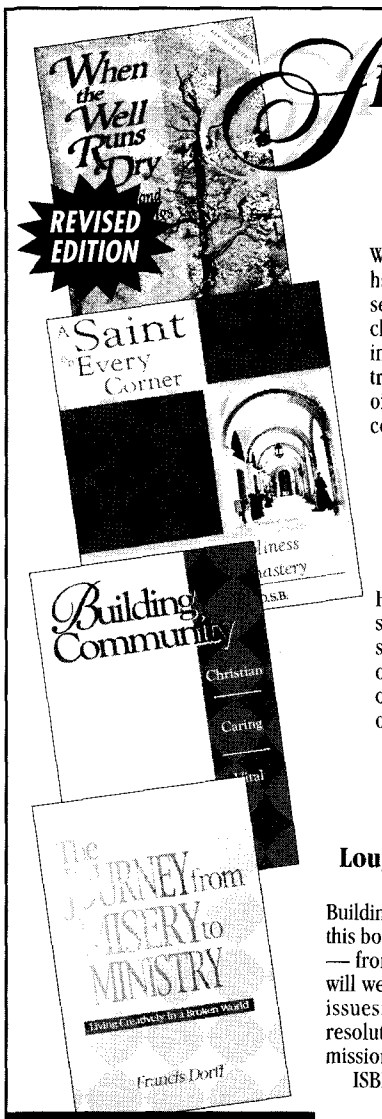
The book's bland façade slips in an essay by Leon Kass, whose brilliant (and tendentious) reading of the Babel story swerves into a dark polarization between moderns who are given up to "total self-creation" and those who live in "obedient dependence." Kass calls for a politics that hears "the voice of what is eternal, true, and good," never indicating, of course, who (besides himself) already knows these absolutes in the contingent world of politics.

The questions raised in this somewhat mysterious project are indeed central ones for the seriously religious: how to live a truly spiritual life; and whether one can do so while participating in so "broken" a world. Like the move to the "desert" in late-classical civilization, the impulse to live (as a poet once put it) "unspotted by the world," fuels current calls for a return to sexual purity and "traditional" roles for men and women in perfectionist movements. Most challenging is the volume's postecclesiastical mood, and the indictment of mainstream Christianity for its "infection" by late-modern individualism and narcissism.

The "hopeful signs" the editor claims to discern, and the "profound spirit of openness to the world" he attractively proposes, do not, then, capture the larger drift of the bulk of these essays. The presiding tactic is to so overstate the contamination of the "modern" as to justify a retreat into privacy, and turning one's back on mere people and the intractable and "messy" problems (including one's own "divisions") of the fragmented present.

The book as a whole strongly affirms the vertical thrust of the Christian ethic, stressing dogma and submission. What I find lacking is the horizontal thrust—the loving concern for *others*. Still, Wolfe's project compels a searching look at one's own spiritual integrity. I think finally of Maritain, who, having defined the elements of an "integral" Christian humanism, at the end turned away from the all-too-modern world, and from the "new" church, gone astray in a welter of relativism and Teilhardian pantheism. (*See, The Peasant of the Garonne*, 1968.) A similar loneliness and permanent alienation from this culture, and the occasional descent into anger, mark some of the best of these writers. This almost Tolstoyan rejection of virtually all positions is one principled, though most will think too simple, option. Others—a "remnant"—seem condemned to remain, uneasy and less "pure," *inside* the degraded Secular City. □

David J. DeLaura *is Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania, and former chair of the English Department.*



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THROUGH A MICROSCOPE DARKLY

The Ovary of Eve
Egg and Sperm and Preformation
Clara Pinto-Correia
University of Chicago Press, $29.95, 396 pp.

Dennis O'Brien

Clara Pinto-Correia has written a book as unusual as her own career. She is not only professor of developmental biology at Universidade Lusofona in Lisbon, Portugal, she is the author of several books of poetry and six novels. Perhaps it is her novelist's bent that has produced such an extraordinary work in the history of science. The dominant literary form for stories in science is *melodrama*: the brilliant discoverer (Gallileo, Darwin, Freud) is reviled by the conservative establishment, wages a valiant battle for truth, and is finally vindicated. The hero eventually wins. Pinto-Correia tells the tale of earlier embryology as *epic*: no heroes, no villains.

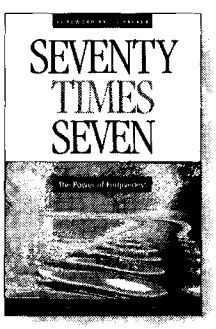
In one sense this account of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century reproductive biology must be without heroes because both sides were dead wrong—or so it seems. Strange as it may sound, the dominant theory to explain biological reproduction was "preformationism": all the generations since Eve were nested inside one another like so many Russian dolls. Gestation and birth were just a matter of these minute creatures growing to proper size. Given the assumption of preformation, the major dispute was whether the *animalcules* were lodged in the egg or the sperm. Ovists and spermists contended for the honor, an honor which, of course, belongs to neither the ovary of Eve nor the sperm of Adam.

But Pinto-Correia's book is epic at a much deeper and even more traditional level. As in Homer and Dante, the book involves a revelatory trip to the underworld. It is the "underworld" which dominates preformationist theory. The "underworld" of seventeenth-century biology was the world of the minute revealed for the first time by the microscope. All of a sudden the world was filled with all sorts of miniscule creatures whose existence had never been suspected. The discovery of sperm itself was fantastic—so many thousands of "worms" lashing about that even today with highly sophisticated instruments it is extremely difficult to obtain a very exact count. And then there was the great model of Newton: if the universe extends outward into a sea of infinite space and time, perhaps the world extends downward toward infinities.

Preformationism was not, however, merely a rash extension of microscopy; it seemed the rational alternative to its only basic rival: epigenesis. Epigenesis seemed to claim that organisms began in an homogeneous state and that the embryo was molded into form solely from external stimuli. Epigenesis had a difficult problem with the obvious persistence of species; lacking an explanation for regularized form, the theory ran counter to scientific rationalism's demand for an explanation for species re-production. Caspar Wolff (1734–94) who is generally credited with the definitive refutation of preformationism because of his careful description of the development of organs in chick embryos, nevertheless "to sustain this theory of creation *de novo*... postulated that the embryo was created by an invisible force, the *vis essentialis*...." Scientific rationalism wanted a mechanism, not an invisible force, hence the theory of pre-formation.

Continuing with the epic muse, Pinto-Correia includes as vital actors in her story all manner of wonders: dwarfs, monsters, and the gods. Nothing could be more "dwarfish" than the *homuncu-*

Spring Ploughing



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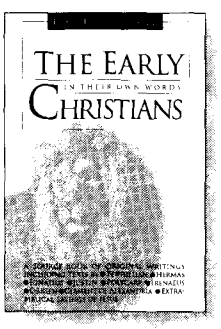

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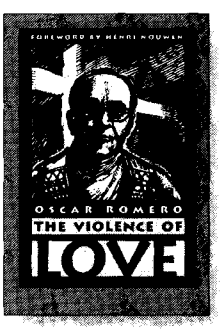

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lus, the tiny pre-formed little person crouched in a sperm cell which Nicholas Hartsoecker depicted in an infamous drawing of 1694. (*Homunculus* was not the term used by these earlier researchers, rather it appears to be a term of opprobrium foisted upon them by self-assured twentieth-century historians.) Monsters (deformed progeny) in turn were a great problem for all the preformationists; if God had incapsulated all generations from the beginning, what was the point of such aberrations? Finally, since all these early scientists were determined Christians—the greatest of them, and Pinto-Correia's only possible hero, was the priest Spallanzani—there was continual and powerful interplay between theology and biological theory.

One can sense the theological import from difficult issues faced by spermists and ovists respectively. Under the general preformationist assumption, various savants championed either the ovum or the sperm as the locus of the prior form. The spermist camp had insuperable theological problems, however, because of the profusion of sperm. If there really was a pre-formed human in each sperm, what was the spiritual fate of all the sperm-persons who never connected with an ovum? Ovists, on the other hand, suffered from what Pinto-Correia labels "the curse of the left testicle." Folk and some learned lore had it that women were produced when sperm of the left testicle was involved in gestation; men were produced by the right. The left is feminine (*sinister*, Lat.). Why would God chose to bundle the human race into the lesser, sinister female?

Pinto-Correia is by no means confined merely to Christian overlay. She ranges about the world's creation myths from the pyramids to Polynesia, as she demonstrates our fascinating attempts to find some connection between human meaning and the mysteries of nature. There are many reasons for reading this work: a delight in the *curiosa* which abound in this early science: Jablot's drawing of a microrganism with a mustache, Dalenpantius's little-man-in-the semen who is wearing a hat. ("I have seen this thing with my own eyes....") One can learn the lesson that instrumentation not only reveals, it also misleads; then the microscope, now the computer with our present temptation to reconstruct human thinking as computation. The embryology of the seventeenth and eighteenth century offers a compelling case study of the intersection of so-called "pure science" with everything from theology to politics. (Preformation was a wonderful prop for the stability of social class, kings produce kings, commoners replicate from generation to generation. Epigenesis suggests that everyone starts homogenous, equal—an embryology for democracy.) Finally, one should not think that the basic issues have been put to rest. In the final chapter, "The Fat Lady Will Not Sing," Pinto-Correia notes the preformationist aura of *The Bell Curve* (published 1994) which argues that "our mental limits are established at fertilization." She concludes: "Nobody said that reproduction was an easy matter during the Scientific Revolution, but the subject has not become any easier today...." □

Dennis O'Brien's *most recent book is* All the Essential Half-Truths about Higher Education *(University of Chicago Press).*

BISHOP WITH TRUST FUND

Presences
A Bishop's Life in the City
Paul Moore
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $28, 344 pages

Bethe Dufresne

An Episcopal bishop who is a family friend always had a funny quip to allay my fears when I was growing up. On the question of life after death, he used to say it was foolish to worry about the furniture in heaven or the temperature in hell. Paul Moore, the retired Episcopal bishop of New York, takes that thought a bit further—some say too far—in the epilogue of his appealing autobiography. Moore theorizes that if heaven and hell exist, they are the same place. The sheer presence of God, he explains, would be heaven or hell, depending on the sins of the beholder. Refreshingly frank about his own sins and shortcomings, Moore says he'll take his chances on God's mercy if there's such a thing as Judgment Day. And if there's nothing awaiting him but eternal sleep, he's not terribly worried about that, either. After all, he'll never know the difference.

Moore, known as a compelling preacher, doesn't claim to be a theologian. Some sixty years after he first felt God's undeniable presence while making his first confession at seventeen, he is still almost boyishly in love with what he calls "the mystery of being" and thrilled by the adventure, a word he uses again and again, of putting the gospel into practice. Born in 1919, Moore grew up in palatial mansions in Morristown, New Jersey, and Palm Beach, Florida, and received a gentleman's education at Saint Paul's School and Yale. With his vast wealth, intellectual vigor, and lifelong dedication to empowering the poor, he's been compared to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Like FDR, he's also been called a traitor to his class. Other critics complain that his emphasis on social and political action has helped turn many away from the Episcopal church.

But Moore seems never to have had any doubt that politics, inasmuch as it can save or ruin lives, is God's business. In 1951, he accompanied Thurgood Marshall to Mississippi to protest the false arrest and subsequent murder of three black men. At the partially demolished headquarters of voters' rights activists, he conducted Mass with an ironing board as the altar. He marched for civil rights with Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968 and was tear gassed during a peace march in Saigon in 1970.

Moore recounts stories about his life among the very rich, the very poor, and the very powerful with an amazing lack

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of self-consciousness. Although he never patronizes the poor people he lived among during eight years in Jersey City, neither does he underestimate the buoying effect on his own life of a large trust fund. With a keen appreciation for absurdity, Moore remembers how in 1941 he and a buddy shopped for boots at Abercrombie and Fitch on their way to Marine boot camp. But however pampered he and his peers were, the ethos of the rich in 1940 demanded total sacrifice for God and country in war. As an infantry leader on Guadalcanal, Moore was shot in the chest. With typical underdramatization, he recalls that as he lay near death his thoughts weren't of God or Judgment Day, only that this jungle was a strange place for someone like him to die. The terrible experience of killing a Japanese laborer who appeared to be a soldier helped teach Moore how easy it is for a military man, whether he's a U.S. Marine or a Nazi, to convince himself that the enemy is inhuman. Moore ultimately became a visible peace activist during the cold war and Vietnam. But while he chastises George Bush for going to war for oil in the Gulf, he never fully articulates a practical or theological strategy for dealing with Saddam Hussein or another Hitler. For better and worse, his focus is narrower.

In that context, dealing with his own personal wealth has always loomed as an important issue for Moore. Although somewhat embarrassed by his inherited good fortune, the bishop chose activism for the poor rather than self-flagellation. If he had more courage, he writes, he might have given his entire fortune to the poor, as his idol Saint Francis of Assisi did. But he decided that would be irresponsible toward his nine children and that it wasn't necessary to impoverish himself in order to empower the poor. One can read that decision as either sensible or self-serving, and Moore seems to have read it both ways himself. Charity tends to comfort the giver and humiliate the receiver, Moore argues, therefore it's better to raise taxes on the rich to support a more equal distribution of wealth than to count on the intervention of patrons and saints.

The bishop writes frankly but not too revealingly about his personal life, including his ambition, his depressions, and his estrangement from his first wife, who died of cancer in 1973. These and other painful incidents, like the discovery that his daughter was sexually abused by a Jersey City parishioner, make us wonder what anguish he has left off the page.

Although it is clear that God has been the unifying force in Moore's life, overall this book is more about the struggle to live according to God's will than the struggle to articulate an explanation of faith. It would be easy, from afar, to view Moore as an activist first and a bishop second, just as Mother Teresa was often erroneously regarded as a social worker. But Paul Moore is committed to the gospel, and finds spiritual inspiration there for all his controversial works, including the ordination of women and homosexuals.

Strangely, or perhaps not, Moore's high-profile activities around the globe are the least engaging part of *Presences*. As the bishop freely admits, he wasn't

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the leader of the movements he championed, only a presence within them. His essential presence is felt in the city parishes he describes so vividly and, finally, as he leads us on a tour of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, that great Gothic space on Manhattan's Upper West Side, where he reveled in making everyone feel not just welcome, but equal. □

Bethe Dufresne *is a reporter and columnist for* The Day *in New London, Connecticut.*

HARD QUESTIONS, SOFT ANSWERS

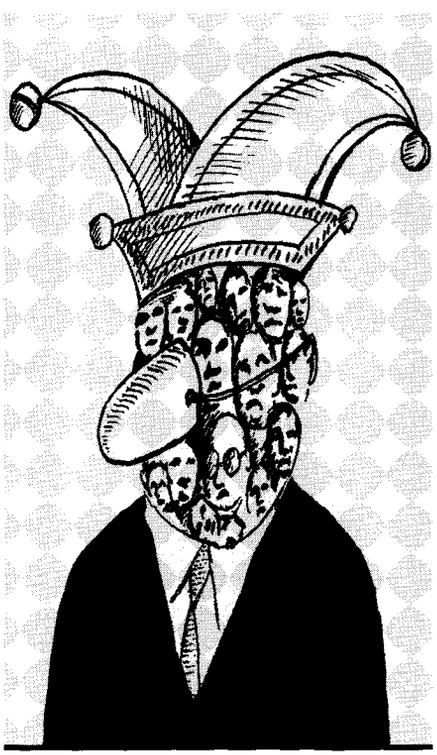
The Religious Sense
Luigi Giussani
translated by John Zucchi
McGill-Queen's University Press, $14.95, 154 pp.

Bernard G. Prusak

Monsignor Luigi Giussani is the head of Comunione e Liberazione (CL), an "ecclesial fraternity" officially recognized by Pope John Paul II in 1982. The movement, as it is often called by its members, developed out of a student association Giussani inspired and led while he was teaching high school in Italy in the 1950s. Mostly lay, mostly "youth" between the ages of twenty and forty, CL is now active in sixty-seven countries, including the United States and Canada. The group's mission, as its sophisticated website attests (www.comunioneliberazione.org), is "education to maturity in the faith." Animated by Giussani's charisma and prolific writing, it has taken a leading role in the pope's "new evangelization."

This background is relevant to understanding Giussani's book. Its publication history is also telling. After appearing in Italian in 1986, it was published in English in 1990 by Ignatius Press. McGill-Queen's edition is in fact a reissue of this translation, though there is no such acknowledgment in the book's publicity. Yet, despite having already appeared in English, the "new" book has been greeted as an event. It has been the subject of two conferences: the first, last November, attended by some thirty bishops and cardinals in Rome for the Synod of the Americas; the second in December at the United Nations. This renewed attention may be explained by McGill-Queen's plan to publish two further books by Giussani that develop the argument of *The Religious Sense*. But a reading of this book suggests a less academic interest, for Giussani's book is no ordinary work of foundational theology.

There is a grave need for what Giussani does: write an invitation to faith. Theology, he saw even before Vatican II, cannot belong only to the theologians. In a culture where faith is no longer a given of life, where the church is no longer coextensive with society, it is something of a trick, if not self-deception, to be a believer without understanding what one believes. But Giussani's book is an example not of faith seeking understanding, but of faith seeking uncritical—even unearned—affirmation.



Against the positivist reduction of life to mathematical equations or biochemical reactions, Giussani argues for openness to the "ultimate questions"—whence? why? whither? As he puts it, "What is the meaning of everything?" For him, this question arises out of "the radical engagement of the self with life." That engagement is at once existential and religious. Living life fully leads to religion and to a belief in God. According to Giussani, this existential argument is the most realistic, reasonable, and respectful of human longing. "If I truly wish to know [an object]," he writes, "I have no choice but to look down and fix my eyes on the object itself." Applying this principle, he argues that "the world is a sign. Reality calls us on to an Other. Reason, in order to be faithful to its nature and to such a calling, is forced to admit the existence of something other underpinning, explaining everything." This "education in freedom" presupposes only a community, the church, to make it happen. From communion follows liberation. Over and against atheistic humanism, Giussani concludes that religion is not a denial of human life, but an affirmation of its deepest tendencies.

Giussani's book is short and its argument correspondingly short on substance. "What is the meaning of everything?" sounds like the most radical question one can ask. But finally this question is grasping at air. For example, people often ask "why?" when they're suffering, or when a loved one is suffering. For Giussani, "the very existence of the question affirms the existence of an answer." But is it really that easy? For Giussani, apparently it is. "The human being cannot avoid this alternative: either he is the slave of men or a subject, dependent upon God," Giussani writes. Encountered in high school this rhetoric of either/or may have been thrilling, but finally it is manipulative and reductive in its own way.

To make his argument, Giussani quotes not only Aquinas, Kant, and Wittgenstein, but novelists and poets. Typically he is satisfied simply to quote, without inter-

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pretation, as if it were possible to understand a poem, or anything, by merely looking down and fixing one's eyes on it. Giussani does not bother with interpretation but instead uses poetry as mere illustration on his way to a predetermined end. Lost is the density of life—its complexity and ambiguity—poetry exists to defend. Caught "between yes and no," God or not, the reader is cut off from not only the reality of doubt, but from questions about who or what God is. What's more, the reader who has known suffering is deprived of the language to ask another essential human question: Why, God, have you forsaken me?

Giussani's style of argumentation also leads to dubious conclusions. "There must be a revolution," he writes, "for the defense of what is human, and this revolution can have only one characteristic: it must be authentically religious, and therefore, genuinely Christian." What exactly is the force of the "therefore" in that sentence? Does Giussani want to say that only Christian faith is "authentically religious"? Unhappily, his claim that "the church alone, in its tradition, defends the absolute value of the person" appears to cut this way. Giussani's echoing of the rhetoric of the culture of life (the church) and the culture of death (everything outside it) not only makes for terribly simplistic and reactionary politics, but confuses the Holy Spirit with the church.

On the Comunione e Liberazione website, the description of the book's French edition warns against getting stuck on the movement's "most visible, read most political, aspects" and failing to understand "what could move thousands of youth to change their life so radically and durably." Doubtless it happens that CL changes people's lives, and that's why it's important. It answers a thirst for meaning. But Giussani's book is no unshakable foundation. Try as one might, it is difficult to suppress the suspicion that *The Religious Sense* has been reissued and hyped precisely because of its politics: old-style theological triumphalism in new-age dress. □

Bernard G. Prusak *is a graduate student in philosophy at Boston University.*

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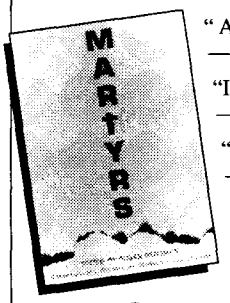

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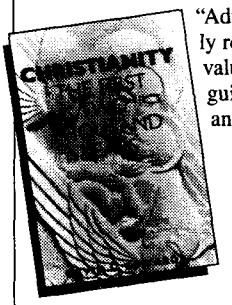

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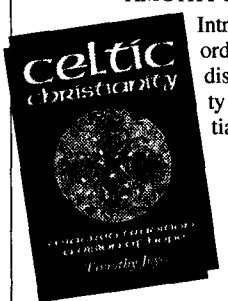

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MULTIPLE CATHOLICISMS

On the Padres' Trail
Christopher Vecsey
University of Notre Dame Press, $50, 440 pp.

Carl L. Bankston III

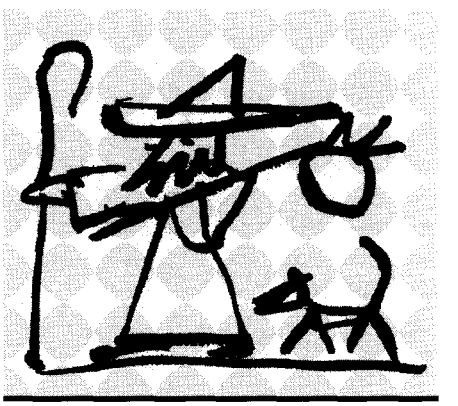
Since Christianity is a religion of conversion, its relation to the religions it has supplanted has always posed a problem. How complete should the break with the past be? Should Greek philosophy and Christmas trees be regarded as pagan adulterants of the faith or as old traditions pressed into a new service? As a successful religion of conversion, Christianity has also been a religion of empire, and this has posed a second problem. Is it on the side of the imperial powers that spread it or on the side of the conquered people who may resist it or practice unorthodox versions of it?

These two problems haunt every page of Christopher Vecsey's new history of the spread of Spanish Catholicism among the native people of North America. Vecsey, a professor of Religion and Native American Studies at Colgate University, provides a detailed chronicle of Catholicism in Mexico, the territory that became the Southwestern part of the United States, and California. Everywhere native people drew on older spiritual traditions in interpreting and expressing their Catholicism, and it is difficult to say when their faith was Christianity in local cultural trappings and when it was simply paganism with a thin Christian veneer. Everywhere, also, the padres, the promulgators of the faith, occupied an ambivalent position between the conquerors and the conquered and provoked ambivalent reactions from their flocks. Sometimes the padres acted as agents of the Spanish military and cultural conquest. Sometimes they protected those in their care from secular authorities. Frequently, the padres and their flocks differed over doctrine and ritual.

In central Mexico, centuries of efforts to extirpate native religions have resulted in Christian rituals absorbed into an Aztec worldview. In the north, the Yaquis voluntarily adopted Catholicism as a part of Yaqui identity and the Jesuits helped to maintain an eighteenth-century Yaqui nation that was largely independent of Spanish secular government. Even today, the Yaquis retain a religion that is an amalgam of Catholic and indigenous beliefs and practices. Still further north, the Papagos have developed both a Catholicized version of their traditional beliefs and a form of folk Catholicism, and they recognize each of these as a legitimate path of spirituality.

Vecsey's description of the religious history of the Pueblos, in what is now New Mexico, provides insight into tensions that continue to affect the role of Catholicism in the Southwest. The priests of the seventeenth century attempted to enforce orthodoxy ruthlessly and brutally, helping to provoke an Indian rebellion in 1680. A distrust of outsiders survived the Spanish reconquest, but Pueblo religion was deeply affected by Christian influences, so that Catholicism and non-Christian practices became intricately intertwined. As recently as the 1950s, the tension between Pueblo traditionalism and Catholicism provoked a crisis when Pueblo officials forcibly expelled a resident Catholic priest who had tried to stop syncretistic ceremonies.

In California, Vecsey explains, the mis-



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sion system of Fray Junipero Serra brought Native Americans to Christianity, but it also destroyed indigenous cultures. Thus, the movement for the canonization of Fray Serra has stirred up controversy and anger among contemporary Native Americans, and it has stimulated a debate over whether the California Franciscans were protectors and instructors of the mission Indians or cultural imperialists. Although Vecsey generally avoids taking sides in this book, he makes it clear he thinks that Serra's canonization would be disastrous for Indian Catholicism in North America.

First in a three-volume series titled *American Catholic Indians, On the Padres' Trail* is an invaluable source for all of those interested in the religious history of Native Americans, Native-American culture and customs, and religious institutions in Native America. It brings together archival materials, ethnographies, historical works, personal observations, interviews, old newspapers, and other printed sources. In particular, Vecsey's research in diocesan archives and in the records of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions at Marquette University has made valuable data available. Out of this wealth of information, Vecsey has managed to shape a rich and nuanced reconstruction of the five-hundred-year encounter between the representatives of the Catholic church and the people these representatives sought to bring into the Christian fold. The book is comprehensive in its treatment, showing both the similarities and the great differences among the Catholicisms that emerged from the encounter. It effectively demonstrates that this encounter is a continuing one, and that contemporary events in Native American religious life have deep historical roots.

Vecsey treats his subject as complex and problematic, never reducing it to a drama of heroes and villains. He does not present the variety of religious forms among Native American Christians simply as a celebration of cultural diversity: He recognizes that other believers, especially members of the church establishment, may reasonably question the orthodoxy and even the Christianity of many of these Catholic-influenced religious systems. He also realizes that the beliefs and practices of Native North Americans cannot be fit into a neat pagan-Christian dichotomy, and that classification is often a matter of perspective.

Readers will come away from *On the Padres' Trail* with a new appreciation for the problems of syncretism and imperialism in Native American Christianity. Colorful customs, like the widespread dance of *Los Matachines* that supposedly commemorates the Spanish defeat of the Aztecs and the conversion of Montezuma, take on a new significance when we see them as products of a long-standing dialogue between cultures and faiths. Christopher Vecsey has made a signal contribution to our understanding of historical and contemporary religion in North America, and we can only hope that the next two volumes in this series live up to the achievment of the first.□

Carl L. Bankston III *teaches in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.*

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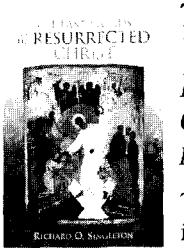

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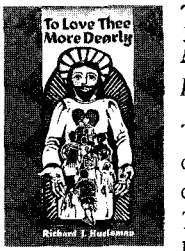

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

Eucharistic Prayer No. 1, with little attempt at the use of inclusive language. The lay people kneel for the entire Eucharistic prayer, and Latin hymns and traditional hymns of the 1950s are sung; much of the Mass (the *Sanctus* and the *Agnus Dei*) is also in Latin. Of the seven foreign-born priests in our diocese, the one I've encountered is not at all familiar with modern biblical scholarship; in a homily he told the kids that it is a mortal sin to talk back to their parents, and that they must go to confession before receiving the Eucharist. In general, the reforms of Vatican II are being thrown out as fast as possible.

CAROL ANDERSEN
Silver Lake, Ind.

Deacons are different

Luke Timothy Johnson (and the editors) should know better. In his contribution to the "Fourteen Reports from the Pews," Mr. Johnson refers to "lay deacons," a term without meaning in the Catholic church. Once ordained a deacon, a lay person becomes a member of the clergy. Apart from this oversight, the reports were appreciated by our liturgy committee.

JOSEPH J. MANSON
Erdenheim, Pa.

A tower built on air

Why does anybody believe Monica Lewinsky? All around us we find people who love to tell exciting sexual stories about themselves—it's such a human thing to do. What's more thrilling to a Washington aide than a story about an affair with the president? Her tale would get taller and taller if she found an eager listener who never seemed to doubt a word. But nobody in the media says these obvious things. For the media, the exciting thing is to discuss a president, to ask whether Americans care if he's an adulterer and a liar, whether the media are at fault for reporting (if that's the word) on his sexual conduct.

Hasn't anyone noticed that to engage in these speculations one must

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assume Clinton is guilty? The sheer weight of speculation is creating that impression all by itself. I think the polls show that people recognize that something awful is happening: The presidency is besmirched; injustice is being done to a man who is probably guilty of nothing but flirting; and our country is shamed by scandal politics.

MRS. ROBERT H. KANE
Austin, Tex

A media malady

While agreeing with most of E.J. Dionne, Jr.'s overview of the Clinton situation ["Re: Clinton & Lewinsky," February 13], I take issue with his defense of the media. "In truth," he wrote, "most of the press does not love to report on this stuff."

When Clinton's ratings soared after the media's initial frenzied lunge at him in connection with the Lewinsky story, media people lamely tried to recover the moral high ground by contending that they were simply responding to the American public's insatiable appetite for sex. All the public's fault.

That's baloney. Polls showed the public overwhelmingly thought the media guilty of overkill. This suggests that the reaction of most people watching the channels those first few days was, "Give us a break!"

Some of us were vainly hoping for something more than a glimpse of John Paul II in Cuba at the time—a significant piece of history in the making. If the media are so reluctant to report on "this stuff," why were anchormen and crews pulled out of Havana to go baying off like a pack of hounds in pursuit of Clinton? As myself a newspaperman for years before ordination, this doesn't strike me as intelligent, responsible journalism.

(REV.) GEORGE P. CARLIN
New York, N.Y.

On biblical storytelling

Luke Timothy Johnson's article on biblical studies [January 16] accurately describes the limits of the historical method for our rich tradition. And he hints at alternatives open to Catholics.

Tantur Rector Search Announcement

Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies in Israel invites nominations and applications for the position of rector. Tantur, located just outside Jerusalem on the road to Bethlehem, is a center for theological inquiry, Christian ecumenical studies, and interreligious dialogue between Christians and those of other world faiths, especially Jews and Muslims. The institute, jointly founded by Pope Paul VI and the University of Notre Dame, is a residential center for visiting scholars interested in the ecumenical and interreligious dimensions of scriptural, theological and pastoral studies. It also offers three-month sessions in continuing education for parish clergy, religious teachers and other church workers, as well as semesters of international study for undergraduates. Since its creation in 1971, over 3,500 Orthodox, Protestants, Anglicans and Roman Catholics have participated in the programs.

The rector is the academic and administrative leader of the institute, and is responsible for the continuing development of its ecumenical and interreligious mission. With the assistance of the vice-rector and administrator, the rector oversees the educational programs and conferences, the finances, and the staff, and develops cooperative relationships with appropriate academic and religious persons to further the aims of the institute, both in the local and international arenas.

The successful candidate will possess significant experience in educational administration and a distinguished record of academic accomplishment in the area of biblical theology, ecumenical and interreligious studies, or related fields. Excellent management, communication, interpersonal and cooperative skills are necessary qualifications. A doctorate is preferred, and a working knowledge of Hebrew and/or Arabic would be strong assets in the position.

Nominations and applications will be accepted until May 1, 1998. Applicants should provide a letter of introduction, a current resume and four references. Applications should be submitted to:

Tantur Rector Search Committee
c/o Rev. Mark L. Poorman, C.S.C.
134 Hayes-Healy Center
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

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After twenty-five years of teaching biblical storytelling, I have concluded that the failures we see at the parish level are rooted in seminary formation that teaches biblical and homiletic studies in strict isolation from each other. The two subjects must be taught in the same coursework by professors who are fully competent in both disciplines. This failure of linkage is perpetuated by deficient programs in continuing education for priests and deacons, a reality in almost all dioceses.

Can religious imagination be nurtured in biblical and homiletic studies? Yes, Catholics must honor metaphor, parable, allegory and religious fantasy in both the pew and the classroom. Catholic preaching is dismal because we have abandoned these elements of our patristic and medieval roots. And who suffers from this lack? The laity, who come to church, as the novelist Kurt Vonnegut says, "not to hear preachments but to daydream about God."

ROBERT BELA WILHELM, TH.D.
Hagerstown, Md.
The writer is director of the School of Sacred Storytelling in Hagerstown.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Residence Hall Rector

The University of Notre Dame is a Catholic university founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross. Approximately 6,550 of the 7,600 undergraduates live in 27 single-sex residence halls on campus.

Within its undergraduate residence halls, the University strives to create communities of faith and learning that serve as catalysts for the integration of students' intellectual, spiritual, and social development. The Rector is the principal person in charge of an undergraduate residence hall. This position is held by priests, male and female religious, and committed lay people.

Together with a graduate student Assistant Rector and undergraduate Seniors serving as Resident Assistants, the Rector educates, counsels and consoles, accompanies students in the life of faith, and calls students to accountability in accordance with University behavioral expectations. The Rector also acts as liaison to the Housing Office and other University Departments responsible for the physical condition of the residence hall.

The University currently has positions open for Rectors in men's and women's residence halls. A Master's degree is preferred. The position of Rector is a full-time, live-in position, although some Rectors hold part-time teaching positions or part-time administrative assignments.

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For further information or to request an application, please contact:

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AMONG THE MONKS

Nancy G. Westerfield

The stairs. A steep unbroken flight, eighteen steps leading down to the retreat center's dining room. Ahead of me, in his black-and-white Crosier habit following 6:45 A.M. Mass, Brother Marty limps one step at a time, grasping the handrail. Not to startle him from behind, I take my time descending noiselessly to breakfast. I too touch the handrail for a moment. I too have grown older.

Twenty years ago, with my husband approaching retirement, he and I began to spend a week twice a year in this Catholic retreat house. Actually, he could spare only a weekend from university teaching. The other five days were mine: reading, writing, savoring monastic peace and prayer. "Single woman on private retreat: Room 3," said the bulletin board.

The stairs were nothing to us then. There are multiple flights of them in this 1889 foundation that was first a girls' academy. In all the years of our marriage, my husband and I never owned or drove a car. We adopted this particular sanctuary because it was only sixty-five miles from our mid-Nebraska home, and accessible by public transportation.

We adapted readily to monastery life, if not the complete Augustinian rule. Above all, my husband and I found ourselves supremely compatible with the community, thirty to forty strong. Up the stairs and down, the bustle of novices, already college graduates, students with varied gifts and accomplishments. At table, after sharing the hearty food from the monastery kitchen, my husband might find himself deep in discussion with priests and brothers who were his peers in learning and social concerns.

Brother Marty was one of them. A World War II veteran, with thirty-eight bombing missions as a gunner, and now a passionate peace activist who had been arrested for "crossing the line" at a protest rally, he engaged my ex-army professor in profoundly brotherly argument over differing points of view. At the same time, Brother Marty and I were collaborating on artistic projects, his artwork to my verse for Christmas-card designs and arts council auctions. Beyond his intense spirituality and his intellect, Brother Marty captivated me by the way he was using his art to reach developmentally challenged Catholic children in the CCD classes he was teaching.

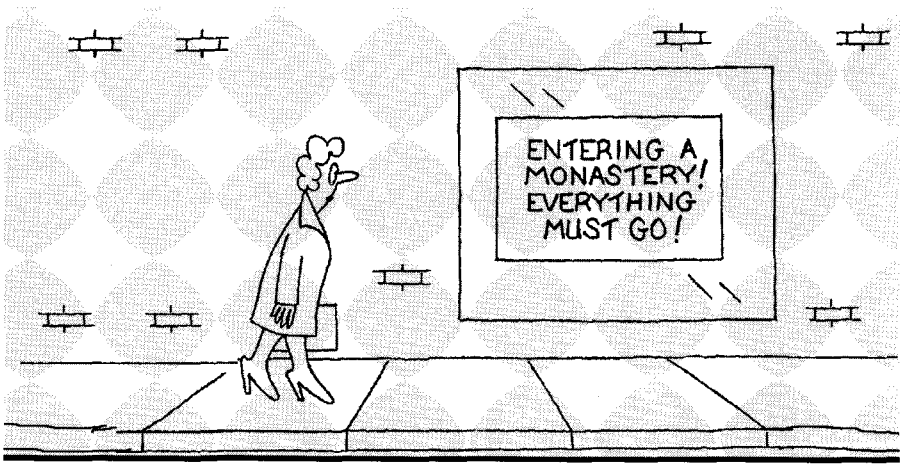
Along with the youthful Crosiers, there were older ones, too, men like my husband progressing toward retirement. For some, the stairs were too many: their rooms were on the first floor. Father Leo, Father Joe, Brother Matthew: what stories they had to tell us of their lives and work in the missions. Crosiers don't die; they stop working. Soldier-clerics from their 1210 beginnings, they pursue a tradition of ministry, service, and hospitality.

As time passed, we grew ever closer to these gentle friends. Often, I was late going up the stairs after evening dinner. Someone at my table—though seating is always at random—began to talk intensely of his day, his life-journey, his perplexities. I listened. More and more, I listened, my ear from outside the community a safe one for someone's story being poured out. I learned secrets, some of them saddening, crises in the house and the order. I learned about human hostilities, jealousies, resentments, suspicions, possessiveness, in this family, a family like every other family from my world.

But I learned of the inextinguishable flames of faithful vows, the dignities of faithful deaths. One by one, these friends began to die, the steps down from last rites in the monastery chapel leading to consecrated ground in the gardens. There Father Leo sleeps, and Father Joe, and Brother Matt. Beloved Brother Marty, shuffling the stairs in his Parkinson's, will rest there.

It is twenty years later. My husband has Parkinson's now. Lately the stairs proved too much. He was allowed to ride the freight elevator down to the dining room and to the cloister library, his rare privilege to read there. I am younger, the stairs do not daunt me yet. But I count the springs when I can still return here to grow older in this community that embraced us. Here I have both given and taken away. Here I have shared my story, and listened to others'. Here my own hope and faith yearly are renewed. □

Nancy G. Westerfield *is a poet who lives in Kearney, Nebraska.*



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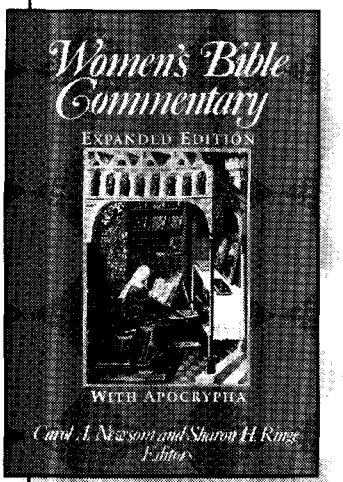

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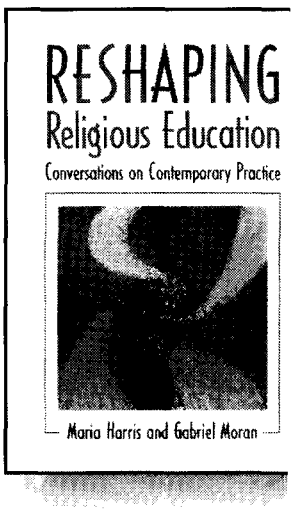

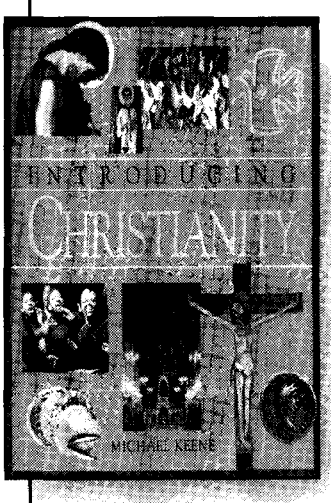

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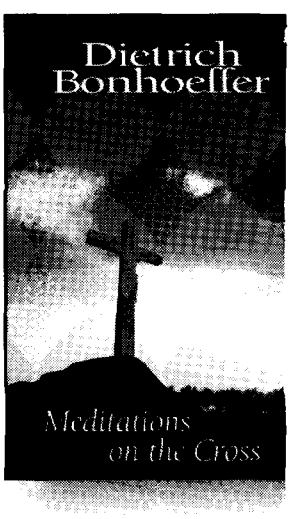

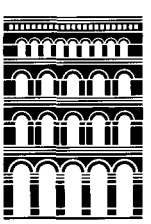

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